No. 15

TESTIMONY

AGAINST

SOCIAL EVILS.

BY A COMMITTEE

OF THE

Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland.

LONDONDERRY:
PRINTED BY JAMES MACPHERSON,
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Testimony against Social Evils.

BY A COMMITTEE OF SYNOD.

I.—SABBATH DESECRATION.

BY DR. HOUSTON.

In terms of the Synod's remit, the Committee take leave to present the following statements and warnings in relation especially to three great classes of prevailing social evils, which at present afflict society, threaten the Church, and endanger the welfare and prosperity of the nation. These are, *First*—Sabbath Desecration. *Secondly*—Licentiousness; and *Thirdly*—Intemperance. There are other abounding moral evils in our day, which provoke God's displeasure, and bring down judgments upon the land; but these have of late spread to so great an extent, are so inconsistent with our high profession and privileges, and of so aggravated a character, and their prevalence withal tends so greatly to injure the Church, and to undermine the foundations of society, that, in accordance with Synod's instructions, they demand particular attention.

I.—THE AUTHORITY AND ENDS OF THE SABBATH.

Though the Divine authority and perpetual obligation of the Sabbath have been impugned, yet both are susceptible of the fullest vindication. In the WESTMINSTER CONFESSION, (Chap. xxi., sect. 7), the Divine law and perpetuity of the Sabbath are thus stated :—

"As it is of the law of nature that in general a due proportion of time be set apart for the worship of God, so, in His Word, by a positive, moral and perpetual commandment, binding all men in all ages, He hath particularly appointed one day in seven for a Sabbath to be kept holy unto Himself; which, from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, was the last day of the week; and from the resurrection of Christ, was changed into the first day of the week, which, in Scripture, is called the Lord's Day, and is to be continued to the end of the world as the Christian Sabbath." This statement is in full accordance with the whole testimony of the Scriptures on the subject. The rest of the Sabbath was appointed by God Himself in Paradise. It was expressive of His resting and being refreshed after creation was finished. It was instituted for the benefit of man as a

period of necessary rest from bodily labour, and of holy rest for the soul, in contemplating the character, perfections, and works of God, and preparing for His higher destinies. Our Lord's exposition of the primitive institution—"*The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath*"—plainly implies that the Sabbath was appointed at the time when man was created, when there were no separate races or nationalities. It was made for universal man, and for his benefit in the largest sense, both in body and soul, and in all his relations. There is clear evidence, in the early records of revelation, that the Sabbath was observed by the people of God, from the creation to the giving of the law upon Mount Sinai; and the monuments of antiquity bear testimony that ancient nations, widely separated, had regard to the rest of the seventh day—primitive tradition borrowed from Divine revelation, teaching them the importance of its observance. When the law of the Decalogue was proclaimed with a loud voice from Mount Sinai, the command regarding the weekly Sabbath was issued by the authority of the Great Lawgiver. It was assigned a central position amid the eternal verities of the moral law; and the reasons given for its observance were taken from its primitive institution, and had an obvious respect to its universal observance. It was afterwards written by the finger of God on the tables of stone, and lodged, with the other moral precepts, inside of the Ark of the Covenant, and underneath the Mercy Seat—the emblem this, that it was a part of the holy law of God, which the Redeemer had within His heart; and that, instead of being set aside and abrogated, it is confirmed, and the obligation of its observance strengthened through the atonement of Christ.

Our Lord and His apostles declared the perpetual obligation of the moral law, as contained in the Ten Commandments; and in a special manner, by many express declarations, added their high sanction to the permanent obligation of the Sabbath day. The change of the day, from the seventh to the first day of the week, under the Christian dispensation, made no change in the moral character and obligation of the institution. It was *reasonable* that, as the primitive Sabbath commemorated the rest of God when creation was finished, there should be specially set apart a day to commemorate the more glorious rest of a completed redemption. The change was not obscurely pointed to in ancient predictions. The facts and examples of the New Testament, as being under the eye and having the sanction of the apostles, are equivalent to preceptive injunctions. Our Lord rose from the dead on the first day of the week, and appeared to His disciples when they were assembled for worship. Eight days after, when they were convened for a like purpose, He came and stood in the midst of them. The Holy Spirit was poured out on the first day of the week at Pentecost, and thus inaugurated the Christian dispensation. The apostles assembled with the primitive Christians for public worship and the dispensation of the Lord's Supper on the same day; and at the end of the first century, before the close of the canon of the New Testament, this day was generally known, as it was universally observed by the early Churches, as "THE LORD'S DAY." The Sabbath rest is thus of Divine institution and authority; it was designed, not for the Jewish people exclusively, nor as part of a shadowy and temporary economy, but to be for the benefit and blessing of the whole human family, and

to continue till the consummation of all things. The change to the first day of the week, having the high sanction of our Lord and His apostles, instead of abrogating the law of the Sabbath, displays more conspicuously its real nature and design. It is now the commemoration of the finished work of Jesus—of His "triumphantly ceasing from that work, and entering into His rest." It is a solemn and delightful celebration of this—the rest of the believing soul in the completed redemption. It is a day of spiritual rejoicing and praise in grateful remembrance of Him who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. And it is the fit prelude and preparation for the heavenly rest, the eternal "Sabbath-keeping" that remaineth for the people of God. Commemorating the work and exaltation of Him who, though rejected of the builders, has become the Head Stone of the Corner, the Church is taught joyfully to sing in all ages—"THIS IS THE DAY WHICH THE LORD HAS MADE; WE WILL REJOICE AND BE GLAD IN IT."—(Psalm cxviii. : 24.)

The ENDS and BENEFITS of the Sabbath are most important and salutary. It secures, by Divine enactment and authority, a stated period of bodily rest, which is needed and singularly fitted for men and the lower animals. It is wonderfully adapted to man's intellectual and moral nature. It purifies and elevates social intercourse; and by bringing the soul into converse with God—the object of worship—and with the great facts of human redemption, and the awful realities of the world to come, the Sabbath raises the individual above the fleeting things of this world, and realizes to himself the grand concerns of his immortal destiny.

Nor less important and beneficial is the Sabbath rest to communities. It blesses the family, is the main support of peace, order, and good government throughout the community. It is emphatically "the poor man's day." Cities and nations are peaceful, industrious, and prosperous, according as the Divine law of the Sabbath is honoured and obeyed. And, on the other hand, in all places where the Sabbath law is contemned, and where gross Sabbath-breaking prevails, civil and religious liberty rests on no secure basis; crimes of various kinds abound, and the judgments of heaven are sent to avenge the dishonour done to the authority of the Lord of the Sabbath, in despising and trampling under foot, what is, at once, His most gracious ordinance, and the best boon to fallen humanity.

II.—FORMS OF SABBATH DESECRATION.

1. *The Post-Office and Sabbath Mails.*—However great the advantages of the Postal establishment, it must be regarded as under law to God. It may not in any case infringe upon a positive Divine command, which enjoins respecting the Sabbath—"*On it thou shalt not do any work.*" The regular transmission of the Mail on Sabbath is ordinary civil labour, and is a plain and palpable violation of the law of God. The labour done at the Post-office in receiving, assorting, and stamping letters, newspapers, and other packages, is ordinary work, often onerous and exhausting. Even when the officials are employed but a few hours in such a business, they are thereby indisposed and unfitted for the proper spiritual observance of other portions of the Lord's day. Besides, when the Post-office is kept open, and mails are transmitted

on the Sabbath, large numbers of other persons, in addition to those who make up the mails, are employed in carrying and delivering letters and parcels. Strong temptations, also, are held out to multitudes to receive and open letters on business on the Sabbath, and so to have their minds and hands occupied with worldly concerns.

The *plea of necessity and mercy* will not avail for keeping open the Post-office, and the transmission of the Mail on the Sabbath. The more rapid modes of conveyance that have been found out in modern times provide amply for all the necessities of commerce and government, without infringing on the weekly Sabbatical rest. London, with its three millions of inhabitants, despatches no mail on the Sabbath, and yet the commercial prosperity of Britain's metropolis is not inferior to that of any other city in the world. Other public establishments are closed on the Sabbath, such as Banks, Courts of Law, and Government Offices. There is certainly no proper reason why the distinction of "lawful days" should be kept up in several departments of public business, and broken down in the Post-office. Sabbath mails deprive the persons employed in forwarding them of the respite from civil labours, to which God has given them an inalienable title. They deprive them of the means of intellectual and moral improvement which the Sabbath supplies: they oppose mighty impediments to the spread and power of the Gospel—supply largely the means of Sabbath-desecration—and have a powerful demoralizing tendency. On these grounds, the members of the Church are earnestly warned against the aggravated sin of taking an active part in the work of the Post-office, and the transmission of the Mail on the Sabbath. They are called to protest loudly against this flagrant case of National Sabbath profanation; and they are affectionately admonished to study so to manage their correspondence as to give no countenance to this common and palpable mode of Sabbath desecration.

2. *The Running of Trains on Railways*—whether as authorized by Government for carrying the Mail, or employed by Directors or Shareholders for passengers and traffic, must be regarded as a case of gross Sabbath-violation. It is ordinary and engrossing secular *work*, done by a large number of persons, who are thereby deprived of the Sabbath rest, and utterly unfitted for its proper religious exercises. Whatever plausible pretences are sometimes adduced for the running of Sabbath trains—as of necessity and mercy—recreation for the working classes—attendance upon the sick and dying—it is perfectly obvious that it is the sordid love of gain and not considerations of benevolence that induce Railway Directors to despatch Sabbath trains. Recently in Scotland, the argument, from necessity and mercy, has been given up; and it has been openly and boldly avowed that Railways on Sabbath are, as a matter of claim and right, to be kept open, whenever a sufficient number of ungodly worldlings, or pleasure-seekers—or infidel and vicious persons go to seek such accommodation in travelling, as will pay for the working of the lines. Beyond other modes of Sabbath travelling and business, *Sabbath trains* on railways—from the large number of servants employed, and the still greater numbers that are engaged in conveying travellers to and from the stations, and from the constant extension of the system are an immense, wide-spread, and national system of gross Sabbath desecration. Directly opposed to

God's command, and essentially evil in itself, it is most injurious in its effects—threatening to bring down, as it has already done, marked judgments upon wanton and unprincipled Sabbath breakers, and upon those who abet and encourage them.

In the view of such a reckless violation of the Sabbath as is caused by the running of Sabbath trains on railways, those who regard God's authority, and value His commands, should be warned to avoid all travelling on railways on Sabbath. Even going in this way to public worship—save in very peculiar cases, should be refrained from, as it sets an example injurious to others, and encourages directors by the gains which they pocket, to persevere in robbing numbers of the Sabbath rest, and in spreading irreligion and immorality throughout the community. Nor can it be right in any instance for those who make a Christian profession to become or continue Shareholders in Railways that systematically violate the Lord's day. By doing so, such persons supply the carriages and servants, for directly infringing the rest of the Sabbath; and they share the gains—if any such accrue—from such profanation. The whole system of Sabbath trains on railways should be protested against, as a daring national violation and contempt of the Divine law—as involving great numbers in flagrant guilt—and as accelerating throughout the community the rapid progress of ungodliness and immorality.

3. Many other forms of open profanation of the Lord's day prevail at present throughout the community, against which the members of the Church should be solemnly warned. Medical men desecrate the Sabbath when they practise in it the general sale of medicine; and when, under the plea of necessity, they spend the whole or the greater part of the Lord's day in visiting patients, to the frequent or total neglect of attending on public worship. It is certain that, in all ordinary cases, physicians and surgeons can secure time to attend upon both the public and private exercises of religious worship on the Sabbath, and, at the same time, give such attendance upon the sick under their care as is necessary.

Shipowners, and captains of vessels at sea, often violate the Sabbath by beginning voyages thereon—under such pretences that "the day is lucky," or that "the tide and wind answer." This is a superstitious contravening of Providence, and an open despite of the authority of of Him, whom "the winds and sea obey," and who is "Lord of the Sabbath day." Those who honour God, and have respect to His commandments, should guard, as much as possible, against a practice—not unusual with those who travel much on business, of so sailing in steam vessels on the narrow seas, that they must perform a part of the voyage, and land on the Sabbath. The due sanctification of the Lord's day requires solemn composure and preparation for its special duties. The whole day, moreover, is to be spent "in the public and private exercise of God's worship, except so much as is to be taken up in works of necessity and mercy"—an exception which can very rarely, if at all, be pleaded in this case.

Again—The keeping open of Public Houses on the Sabbath for the sale of intoxicating liquors, and frequenting them to purchase such drinks, is a plain and gross breach of the Sabbath, and has been found fraught with numerous crimes and outrages upon the peace and

morality of the community. The Government of the country is greatly at fault in authorizing the sale of intoxicating drinks on the Sabbath, while the sale of food and other articles on that day is unlawful; and this operates to an incredible extent to promote drunkenness, and the numerous and aggravated sins and crimes that are its inseparable concomitants.

The parties immediately addressed in the Fourth Commandment are *Parents, Masters, and Magistrates;* and these are especially required to take cognizance of breaches of it; and through them, all others whosoever are enjoined to abstain from servile employment on the Lord's day—"Thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter—nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates." Parents are to guard their children against all profanation of the Sabbath, whether in the way of amusement or recreation, or social intercourse. They are neither to seduce them by example, nor coerce them by authority, nor permit them, through mistaken fondness, to desecrate the Lord's day. On the contrary, they ought, by precept and example, to encourage and constrain them to spend it in public worship, private prayer, religious reading, and godly discourse. Masters are bound, too, to secure to their servants, whether domestic or others, the Sabbath, which is theirs by Divine appointment and prescription, for rest and worship, and not to be let for hire, or spent in pastime. Their contract of service should only be looked upon as relating to the labour of six days. Masters should exact nothing off them on the Sabbath, in the way of service, but what comes strictly under the cases of necessity and mercy; and they should do all in their power to encourage their attendance upon public worship and devotional habits.

Beasts of burden require times of periodic rest as well as men; and the Sabbath is heaven's merciful provision for the lower animals. "*Nor thy cattle.*" Through habits of modern refinement, it is melancholy that in our large towns, and in a country abounding with the means of grace, thousands of coachmen, omnibus, cab and car drivers, are as much debarred from the house of God, as if no Sabbath was kept, or Gospel preached, and no worship performed in the land. When it is necessary to employ a hired conveyance in order to attend public worship, those who do so should do all in their power to encourage such as they employ to attend the ordinances of religion.

The practice of holding fairs and cattle markets on Saturday and Monday is fraught with evil. It affords a pretext for spending the Sabbath hours in travel, it often involves Sabbath bargaining, and, in many cases, it annoys and disturbs the religious part of the community in going to, or returning from their places of worship; and it presents to the young and others, numerous temptations to make light of the observance of the Sabbath, and to engage in its open desecration.

The Sabbath is profaned by walking on public thoroughfares, or in fields in the country for recreation. It is a plain violation of the Scripture injunction—"Let no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way." "Let not your good be evil spoken of." Thousands have ascribed their religious declension and subsequent ruin to Sabbath recreation.

Various other forms of Sabbath desecration are found in social intercourse and in the domestic circle, which are carefully to be guarded

against. Such are vain, trifling, worldly conversation—either in families, or among persons going to or returning from the house of God—convivial entertainments—spending portions of the Sabbath in idleness, or undue attention to dress—light religious reading, which, it is to be feared, has of late become common with the young in many professedly religious families, and is not duly discouraged by parents, nor warned against by ministers and others, who have the oversight and direction of the young. These more private ways of Sabbath desecration, when followed, tend to lessen in the mind a sense of the obligation of the Divine precept, and of the sacredness of the Sabbath institution; and thus to lead to more open and gross Sabbath profanation.

III.—DUTIES OF THE SABBATH.

The Divine command not only prohibits the more glaring and aggravated violations—but likewise all "omission of the duties required," and whatever tends to neglect and disobedience. It is worthy of remark that the Fourth Commandment is enjoined in terms that are observably different from those which are employed in the promulgation of the other precepts of the Decalogue. It is not simply *prohibitory*—but the positive command to observe and keep it holy, and the reasons of obedience, are placed in the forefront of the Divine enactment. "*Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.*" This obviously implies that those who would secure the blessings of the Sabbath, and would guard against all Sabbath desecration, should be principally concerned to promote, as regards themselves, and those with whom they have influence, the thorough sanctification of the Lord's day. This they should do under a deep sense of its vast importance to their own welfare for time and eternity, and of its unspeakable value to the Church and to the nation—and as being an eminent means for the diffusion of Divine truth, and the ultimate establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom in the earth. By careful preparation for the Sabbath rest—by meditation and prayer—guarding against continuing in worldly pursuits to an unseasonably late hour on the day preceding the Sabbath—by an early and active betaking ourselves to the solemn duties of the day—by diligent attendance upon the public means of grace, and seeking earnestly the spiritual profit to be derived from them, we remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. "*Ye shall keep my Sabbath, and reverence my sanctuary; I am the Lord.*" Christians should seek to be "in the Spirit on the Lord's day;" and should earnestly pray that the Spirit from on high be plentifully poured out upon ministers—on the word preached—on the hearers of the Gospel, and on all the assemblies of Mount Zion—that thus the blessings of the Sabbath—the "Pearl of days"—may be abundantly realized.

By devotional reading of the Bible, meditation, self-examination, special private prayer, and personal dedication, Christians should fill up the time of the Sabbath that is not employed in public worship, and works of necessity and mercy. Thus should they sanctify the Sabbath throughout, and call it a delight—the holy of the Lord, and honourable. And heads of families, parents and masters, should improve its precious time by faithful domestic instruction—catechizing and otherwise teaching children and servants, and by walking in a perfect way within their house.

Finally, as Christians, under law to God, let us be ever earnestly concerned to observe this chief way of promoting His glory—by obeying the command, "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy"—and by labouring to bring others to obey it. Thus, as ministers and members of the Church, will we preserve the safeguard of the Church's privileges. Thus, too, as patriots, will we best promote the welfare and prosperity of our native country, when judgments of various kinds have been sent, and may yet still further be poured out upon the Anti-christian earth, to desolate nations that have long been distinguished for open and general Sabbath profanation. And thus will we prepare the Church for her glorious Sabbatical rest in the Millenium, and be ourselves prepared for the heavenly Sabbath-keeping that remains for the people of God.

In the eloquent language of an American minister, (Dr. Humphrey) we add, in conclusion—"But for the moral power of Sabbath Institutions, whose property or reputation would be safe for a single day? Much as the Lord's day is profaned in this country, even now it does more than our magazines and prisons, and other legal terrors, to perpetuate and multiply our social, civil, and religious privileges. Take away this barrier, and you open the flood gates of vice and irreligion upon a godless and suffering people. You may try to prop up their freedom, and admired civil institutions, but all your efforts will be vain. The overflowing scourge will pass through, and neither you nor your children can hope to escape. Who and where is the patriot that would thrust out our ship from her powerful moorings on a starless night—upon an ocean of storms, without anchor or rudder, or compass or chart? The elements around us may remain, and our giant rivers and mountains. Our miserable descendants also may multiply and vegetate, and sit in moral darkness. But our national character and our glorious institutions will go down into the same grave that entombs the Sabbath, and our epitaph will stand forth a warning to the world—'*Thus endeth the nation that despised the Lord, and gloried in wisdom, wealth, and power.*'" Above all human utterances ever should we lay to heart for warning, direction, and confidence, the solemn declaration of the Lord of the Sabbath—"My Sabbaths they greatly polluted; then I said I would pour out my fury upon them in the wilderness, to consume them. Also, I lifted up my hand unto them—that I would not bring them into the land which I had given. Because they despised my judgments, and walked not in my statutes, but polluted my Sabbaths"—(Ezekiel xx.: 13—16.) "Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, *and profane the Sabbath day.* Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? *yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel, by profaning the Sabbath*"—(Neh. xiii.: 17, 18.) "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words; Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it"—(Is. lviii.: 13, 14.)

II.—LICENTIOUSNESS.

BY REV. J. KENNEDY.

Among the impressive facts of history, it is mournful to find that, in all cases of social departure from God, one marked feature of the deep degeneracy, at any time abounding, has always been licentiousness, or a disregard of the divine authority and law in relation to the intercourse of the sexes. Whether in lands in a state of heathenism, among God's ancient people, or in lands which have more or less fallen from the purity and power of Christianity, this sad fact is lamentably prominent.

Among the most advanced and polished of heathen nations, whose records we possess, this vice attained the most frightful dimensions, and entered in some of its most loathsome forms even into their religious observances, so that, to excuse their own foul practices, they represented even their Deities as countenancing, by the most shameful irregularities, the abandoned lives of their votaries.

Among the professed worshippers of the true God also, whether under the former dispensation, or in lands nominally Christian, this has been found to be a vice most difficult to suppress; and, in a very special manner, seasons of declension and of backsliding among the people of God have always been marked by its prevalence. In proof of this, it is only necessary to refer to the revolting scenes of Baalpeor, when Balaam taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication, or to the practices of the sons of Eli, who, though priests of the Holy One of Israel, yet set an example of the grossest lewdness in the very precincts of the sanctuary itself. In later times, it is enough for our purpose to instance the impurities, so sharply rebuked by our Lord, as having found place and countenance in the Churches of Pergamos and Thyatira, or to facts often disclosed in connexion with monastic life, and to carnival scenes, having professedly a religious character, but often more offensive for lewd practices than the worst abominations of heathenism. Such facts are sufficient, not only to prove how dangerous and destructive a vice is that of which we speak, and how hard it is, even with the aid of true religion, to purify wholly from its pollution the masses of society, but also to show to professing Christians how carefully they require to be on their guard against an evil, to which, especially in a low state of religion, so mournful a tendency has always been manifested.

That this vice still abounds to an awful extent in our own highly professing and highly privileged land, is a fact which we cannot conceal from ourselves, however sorrowful the feeling it may awaken in our minds. Our large cities, though centres of civilization, and serving, no doubt, many important ends in the economy of the Divine government, yet exhibit much of Sodom in the extent to which uncleanness prevails, whilst in many rural districts, both in our own and sister isle, reliable statistics have sometimes shown a state of morality which is calculated to make the people of God sigh and cry for the abominations done in the land. Yet, strange to say, there has been less of this sigh-

ing and crying, even among the people of God, in relation to the abounding of this vice, than we would have reason to expect. Its very great prevalence, in almost every form implied in the Seventh Commandment, has, by the influence of an unholy familiarity, lessened the disgust in some minds which the vice should always excite, and thus not only have even God's people been less humbled on its account than we would expect, but many Churches in the land fail to deal with offenders in this respect, in a manner calculated to make them and the world feel the enormity of such sins.

In view of these facts, it is of the utmost importance that professing Christians especially should always recollect that, whilst their God is of "purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity" of any kind in His kingdom, and whilst in the most awe-inspiring terms He denounces immorality of every kind among His people, He sets a mark of special displeasure on sins of uncleanness, and denounces on them a special assurance of judgment. Thus He declares—"The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished. But *chiefly* them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government" (2 Pet. ii. 9, 10). The reference in this passage is to the judgment inflicted on Sodom for its uncleanness (v. 6), and the expression, "but *chiefly them* that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness," being connected with God's knowing how to "reserve the unjust to the day of judgment to be punished," implies that, whilst every other immorality is offensive to God, He marks with special abhorrence sins of the class specified, as having brought ruin on the cities of the plain, gives a special assurance of judgment overtaking them, and intimates that if, in respect to such sins, any individual takes Sodom as his example of trangressing, God will certainly make Sodom his example in punishment.

As, however, the loathesomeness and ruinous consequences of the vice are so fully admitted, and as there is no necessity to enumerate the different forms in which the Seventh Commandment is wantonly violated throughout all grades of human society, from the highest to the lowest—the contents of almost every newspaper furnishing evidence that, with such details, the public mind is kept but too familiar—we prefer turning to an aspect of the matter which we trust may prove of some practical advantage.

It is a sound principle in morals laid down in one of our standards (Larger Catechism, Quest. 99), that, "under one sin, all of the same kind are forbidden; together with all the causes, means, occasions, and appearances thereof, and provocations thereunto." In this statement we have a most important principle in respect to sin, and especially the sin against which it is the object of this paper to warn, of which it would be of the highest practical advantage could men be thoroughly persuaded—viz., that sin in its primary stages is as dangerous and as much forbidden as in its ultimate consummation, and that it is our imperative duty to be on our guard as jealously in respect to *causes*, *means*, *occasions*, *appearances of* and *provocations to* sin, as in respect to its actual commission. Of the truth of this principle, however, we are hard to be persuaded practically in life. Even while abhorrence is universally expressed in relation to sin when consummated, and viewed in its

ruinous consequences, we are apt to speak and act, in respect to what originated or led to the sin, as if it were comparatively harmless. For example, every one professes to abhor drunkenness, yet society at large is continually upholding and supporting institutions and customs, and pursuing courses the direct tendency of which is to make drunkards. In a similar way, men denounce and even punish dishonesty, whilst pursuing courses of duplicity and double-dealing which make men dishonest. So likewise in relation to the sin of which we speak. Society professes to condemn and abhor it, yet cherishes and fosters practices directly or indirectly tending to promote its prevalence. Could we induce society at large, or even professing Christians, fully to abstain from and discountenance everything that has the tendency to become a cause, occasion, or means of, or provocation to uncleanness, it would be utterly impossible that this "social evil" could abound to the extent to which it now unhappily prevails, or pollute and ruin its thousands in the future as it has done in the past.

It is here, we think, that there requires much to be said by way of counsel and warning, and to this we now address ourselves, hoping that, though we may have to speak of some things very plainly, the importance of everything that can help, in any way, to counteract this evil may be our apology, and that we may be the means of guarding some at least against the slightest approach to a vice which has plunged thousands in every age into irremediable perdition. For truly of this vice it may be said—"Her feet go down to death, and her steps take hold on hell."

1. Among the first and most dangerous of those things to be carefully shunned, if we would "escape the corruption that is in the world through lust," is *frequent association with loose and ungodly companions.*

In some respects there is in companionship a closer contact of mind with mind, and thought with thought, than in almost any of the other intercourses of life, and therefore the greater danger that companions ill-selected will prove morally injurious. This is all the more dangerous when, as in our day, a false standard of respectability is set up in society. Wealth, means, and style of living, form the great passport to all the intimacies of social life, and even religious parents make little scruple about permitting their children constantly to frequent the company of persons known to be dissolute and depraved, because forsooth denominated by the world, from their outward circumstances, very respectable. The dangers to which young persons are thus exposed are incalculable. The influence of those already initiated in sin upon the inexperienced and unsuspecting must be disastrous in the extreme, especially when brought to bear upon them at that pliant age, when the principles are not fully formed nor the character developed, and when the mind is so disposed to yield itself up to the guidance of any one professing to be able to lead it to the enjoyment of some fruit of the tree of knowledge of which it has not yet tasted. Without great circumspection and watchfulness, on the part both of themselves and of their parents, young persons of both sexes may be exposed to serious danger from this cause. Young girls, of guileless and unsuspecting innocence of character, may receive, by frequent and injudicious companionship, with some even of their own sex, impressions of which it would have been to them a blessing for ever to have remained ignorant.

On the other hand, being thrown much into companionship with those of the other sex, who perhaps are proud of their knowledge of the world and its ways, they may have gradually, and with serpent cunning, their principles subverted, and their mind and imagination polluted, and thus be in time prepared for becoming the victims of the destroyer. Young lads, too, in going out into the world, and forming intimate companionship with the ungodly, are often subjected to much danger. The knowledge and habit of polluting practices may be thus first communicated which may act most injuriously on their whole after life. Or they may be gradually led to sin step by step. First perhaps initiated into the mysteries of the tavern, then of the theatre, and afterwards of the loose festive party of pleasure, they may be, and often are, gradually prepared for committing, without compunction, sins the very thought of which would have, at one time, filled them with a thrill of horror. Many a young man of fair promise has thus, by flattering speeches and pretended friendship, been led to realize Solomon's description—"I beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a young man void of understanding, passing through the street near her corner, and he went the way to her house." "He goeth after her straightway as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks; till a dart strike though his liver, as a bird hasteth to the snare and knoweth not that it is for his life."

2. *Unnecessary and unseasonable frequenting of public places* has, in respect to this vice, often most ruinous effects.

Many things coming under this head would, in faithfulness, require lengthened notice. We refer only to two.

First—In many rural districts it is customary, especially for young persons, of both sexes, to assemble in great numbers at stated times and places of public resort, where many things abound which must, from their very nature, exert an injurious influence. Drinking customs prevail in such places, and on such occasions, to a lamentable extent, and it was, at least in times past, no uncommon thing for even respectable females to allow themselves to be led into hotels and taverns, and brought into contact with scenes of profanity and intemperance, both polluting and unsafe. Amusements, too, and profane sports, often add their attractions to allure to such places, and still further endanger the morals of those who are not watchfully on their guard against the snares of the Devil. We are most happy to know that, in many places, our people keep away from such public gatherings, and that many of the youthful members of our Church deem it beneath their dignity, as disciples of Christ, to enter such scenes, yet we fear that, in some cases, the influence of such things still leads into positions both of sin and of danger those who, by their profession and vows of consecration to Christ, should have learned to keep aloof from everything inconsistent with their allegiance to Him.

Secondly—In cities and towns no little danger to morals may often arise from the frequency and unseasonableness of meetings held professedly for mutual improvement. In the present day there is quite a rage for young men's associations, the meetings connected with which are usually held at so late an hour, and often so prolonged, that it is impossible but that many are thereby exposed to no

little temptation. Young men thus placed so frequently out of the controlling influence of parents and guardians and of the family circle, and night after night at unseasonable hours traversing the streets, are much more likely to have their morals corrupted than their minds improved. On the occasion also of public meetings of such associations, when large numbers of both sexes assemble, often remaining till a very late hour, we cannot think that the results will be anything but unfavourable to good morals, especially when we take into account that it is no uncommon thing on such occasions for the mental entertainment to be of the lowest moral type, sometimes below the level of the theatre itself. Christian parents cannot be too careful in guarding the minds of their children against the influence of such things, as many of the readings and recitations of the present day, and much of what passes current as literary and for improvement, is more likely to prove a temptation and a snare than to afford any real or solid advantage.

3. Another thing not without much serious danger to morals is the *influence of ill-conducted social parties.*

Whilst we have no desire to deny to any the enjoyment of all the amenities of social life, according to the position God may have assigned them, yet there is often much about what is called social enjoyment, in respect to which Christians cannot be too carefully on their guard. The utter frivolity, and apparent forgetfulness of our obligation to do every thing to the glory of God, that often characterize social parties, at which even religious men and persons of position and office in the Church will act, as if buffoonery and fleshly indulgence were the only things befitting such occasions, are of themselves humbling facts when viewed in connexion with our high profession of religion. But when we add to this that, whilst on such occasions the guests more advanced in life are freely indulging in drink, the more youthful are often found engaged in such intercourse and amusements as the Church has always condemned as immoral and dangerous, such as dancing and profane songs, we cannot but feel that, from the standpoint of Christianity, we must view with great jealousy such social festivities. And when such scenes are prolonged, not only far into the night, but even to an advanced hour in the morning, the evil is still further increased. In that case various loose and even wanton amusements are sometimes resorted to, in order to fill up the time, which, under a sense of personal religious obligation, should be set apart to a higher and better end. Such scenes, too, must sadly interfere with the observance of family religion, at least for a time, as well as with prayer, reading the Word, and meditation in private; and the mind thus deprived of the aid of such exercises will be worse prepared to encounter temptation.

4. The *reading largely much of the literature of the present day* cannot but have a most injurious effect on purity of mind.

One great feature of the times is the amazing quantity of sensational literature wherewith the Press is constantly supplying the reading world. Besides the issue of goodly volumes wholly of fiction, periodicals of every form, of every size, and for every grade in society, are being pushed off in all directions, the contents of which consist chiefly of exciting narrative, tricked out in every meretricious

ornament that can attract the senses and minister aliment to an excited imagination. Even those professedly religious, perceiving the rage now prevailing for the fictitious, have, with few exceptions, devoted a large portion of their space to stories and often exciting and romantic adventure, just seasoned with as much Scripture truth as is deemed necessary to excuse its appearance in such a position. We have thus religious novels, and religious tales, and religious romance, all, forsooth, to promote the kingdom of Christ and advance the interests of religion, as if Paul had not long since written, "But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say?" "For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie, why yet am I also judged as a sinner? and not rather, Let us do evil that good may come? whose damnation is just."

Among the evil tendencies of such reading the following may be taken as examples:—

(1.) It communicates to many minds a knowledge of sins of which they would otherwise have remained happily ignorant. In however guarded language many sins and crimes against God's authority and law—the commission of which is introduced into all works of fiction, even the religious, to make them more sensational—may be described, the youthful mind, through prurient curiosity, will naturally inquire both as to their nature and cause. Thus the bliss of ignorance, where it is folly to be wise, is not only lost, but, as Solomon delares, that "the thought of folly is sin," the very presence of such thoughts, as scenes often found in fiction, so-called religious, are calculated to suggest, cannot but be regarded as both sinful and defiling.

(2.) Such reading, by familiarizing the mind with crime, makes it more easy of commission. Even the most horrid and disagreeable objects become less offensive by being often seen, and familiarity will make us bear even with a measure of complacency what at first appeared disgusting and monstrous. It is also so in respect to crime. Thus it has been observed that lengthened descriptions and minute details in the newspapers, in relation to monstrous crimes that are sometimes committed, have often been followed by frequent attempts to commit crimes similar to those with the particulars of which the public mind had become familiarized. In fact, such descriptions suggest to many depraved minds first, the idea of committing the crime, and then the most effective way of accomplishing their object. In like manner, it can hardly be expected that the mind of the reader can be familiarized with disgusting details of sin, often to be found in the popular literature of the present day, without having its abhorrence of it softened down and weakened, and its watchfulness against it relaxed.

(3.) Such reading, when much indulged in, is so fascinating and engrossing as sadly to mar spirituality of mind and interfere with such spiritual exercises as are necessary to keep the soul in a healthy state. How often through its influence are the Bible, prayer, meditation, and self-examination almost entirely neglected, and thus, whilst the girding on of the spiritual armour is not carefully attempted, and the mind at the same time is habitually living in an artificial and unwholesome spiritual atmosphere, what wonder, if assailed by temptation, that in such a case there is more likelihood of falling into the

snare of the Devil? To "patient continuance in well-doing" it requires a diligent use of all the helps with which God has furnished us, and what then can be expected, as the natural result of that unhealthy excitement and neglect of precious means of grace, which reading of the kind, against which we warn, is always sure to produce, but that it will leave us more liable to be overcome by any sin, especially sins of the flesh, to which we may be tempted?

5. Another thing that often leads to the vice against which we warn *is the inordinate love of dress.*

Among the less wealthy classes especially, many young persons have been led to irretrievable ruin by a desire to indulge this passion. The artful and designing have always found in this passion an opportunity of ensnaring their victims. By indulging their taste for finery and supplying means of procuring coveted adornments, otherwise out of their reach, how often have the loose and dissolute succeeded in leading the vain and foolish of the other sex to courses, which, at one time, they would have contemplated with the utmost abhorrence? Nor should we, perhaps in this connexion, altogether overlook the evil likely to result from the indelicate manner in which fashion sometimes wills that dress shall be worn. The followers of the humble Jesus, in relation to everything calculated to provoke the flesh, or to prove a snare and incentive to evil, cannot be too watchfully on their guard, remembering that it is a solemn warning in relation to this and everything of a sensual tendency—"If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

It may be the means of stirring up some to be on their guard against everything that would tend to promote breaches of the Seventh Commandment, to consider how dreadful are their consequences.

Upon transgressors of both sexes, God inflicts vengeance often even in this life. Such sins render those practising them sensual in character, sear their conscience, harden their heart against good impressions, render their minds callous and insensible to every moral consideration; whilst even corporeally they are often followed by consequences that mark the displeasure of God.

What fearful consequences blast the whole after life of most of the miserable victims of seduction! What can be more pitiable than the case of those who have been first seduced by the arts of the licentious, then abandoned, and, covered with shame, have been driven to become inmates of brothels, or to follow a life of infamy on the street; whilst, by the degradation to which they have been thus subjected, they have become prepared for any other evil course, drunkenness, theft, perjury, infanticide, and all the horrid concomitants of an unblushing life of sin.

On families, much distress, suffering, shame, and even ruin, have been often brought by licentious practices on the part of some of their members. Parties, before God in covenant one to the other, have had all the sacred ties that bound them mercilessly torn asunder, whilst happy homes have been desolated, and those, once rejoicing in the sweetest and dearest relationship, and all the intimacies of domestic life, have become estranged and lost to one another, at least in this life, for ever.

The Church of God suffers from the same cause in her character,

comfort, purity, internal peace, and the joy she would otherwise experience in beholding her "children walking in truth."

Civil society is most injuriously affected by sins of this class. Illegitimacy, physical deterioration, the enormous abounding of profligate women—at once the fruit of the licentiousness practised in society, and the plague and scourge by which God avenges on society its irregularities—divorce courts, with their numberless cases and disgusting revelations, the awful extent to which youth is corrupted—these, and many other social evils, whose name is legion, afflict society as the result of this horrid vice being so extensively practised.

We would only further, in conclusion, remind our readers, especially the more youthful, that not only are all occasions of and provocations to this sin to be carefully shunned, but that there are three considerations in God's Word urged upon all professors of religion as eminently calculated to strengthen them against temptations to uncleanness.

First—That our bodies, as well as our souls, have been redeemed by Christ, and thus, by special purchase, He has a righteous claim to rule over them in all their different powers. "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." Feeling the force of this consideration, how reasonable will that command appear—"Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God."—(Rom. vi. 12, 13.)

Secondly—That, by our union to Christ, we are married to the Lord (Jer. iii. 14), and therefore our bodies should be holy to Him. It is this consideration that makes Paul assert, "The body is not for fornication, but for the Lord." He being our Head and Husband, "we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones." May we not then indignantly ask—"Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid."—(1 Cor., 6, 15.)

Thirdly—That our bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost.—"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."—(I. Cor. iii. 16, 17.) "Builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit," we are thus under the most awful obligation at all times to respect His holy presence. "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."—(2 Cor. vi. 16—18, and vii. 1.)

INTEMPERANCE.

BY REV. J. A. CHANCELLOR.

Sabbath-Breaking, Licentiousness, Intemperance—these three, and the greatest of these, is INTEMPERANCE. This is by far the most prolific source of the Sabbath-breaking and Licentiousness described in the previous papers, and is itself at the present time, in these countries, the greatest national sin and curse that has ever afflicted any Christian land. In the manufacture of intoxicating drinks considerably above 100,000 men are employed at ordinary work on the Sabbath. There are also above 160,000 Licensed Public Houses open for the sale of these drinks every Lord's day in the United Kingdom. In one parish in London, containing 180,000 inhabitants, 2,000 were in attendance in all the places of worship within the parish on the Sabbath, while 20,000 were seen to enter the public houses on one road which is not more than half a mile in length. On a Sabbath evening 4,000 have been known to enter the Tea Gardens connected with one Public House, and numbers continue drinking in these haunts of vice till midnight. "These places are schools where the youth and beauty of our nation are initiated into every crime. Here the broken-hearted mother finds her wayward daughter—here the father finds the son whom he once hoped would be an ornament to society—here the Sabbath-school teacher finds his absent scholar, the teaching of years counteracted in a few weeks. These are the preparatory schools under the patronage of, and sanctioned by the Government, where the rising generation are qualified to serve in penal settlements and houses of correction." There are three houses open for the sale of drink on the Sabbath for every one that is open for the worship of God, and the money expended in the former is immensely greater than all that is consecrated to the service of God in the latter. Of one house in the Metropolis a visitor reports—"The Barman told me they took between £20 and £30 after seven o'clock on the Sabbath evening." In almost every house he found a number of drunken prostitutes. One of these unblushingly replied to a remark about attending public worship—"This is our Church, governor; we serve the devil!"

I.—WHAT IS INTEMPERANCE?

This word is an excessively mild and negative description of a positive and enormous evil. The Bible designates it by the word DRUNKENNESS. There is no Scriptural precedent for the application of the word "temperance" to the use of intoxicating drinks. It refers to the power of self-control—the degree in which we keep our passions under restraint. The word "sober" in Scripture means to be of a sound mind. The attempt to found an argument on these words for the moderate use of intoxicating drinks finds not a shadow of support in all the Word of God. Intemperance is now commonly used as synonymous with drunkenness or intoxication. When the power of conscious self-control is taken away by alcohol, a man of course ceases to be temperate. His sobriety is gone when he ceases to be of a clear and sound mind. The unnatural excitement of intoxication which speedily gives place to unnatural depression; the

stolid look, the unsteady gait, the maundering and mumbling speech —these indicate at once that the drink which has been used has induced a deranged state of the body, with a simultaneous inthralment and degradation of the soul. What could be more destructive of every trace of the Divine image in man than this? In that condition he cannot appear before God in any act of worship, nor perform aright any kind of duty. The very opposite state of mind and body is that which God requires in all who would approach Him—"Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is *excess*"—(this word *asotia* literally describes a state in which there is *no safety or salvation*)—"but be ye filled with the Spirit." These contrasted states are obviously incompatible. "Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor thieves, nor drunkards shall inherit the kingdom of God." It does not require a long succession of acts of drunkenness constituting a prevailing habit, any more than of theft, or of fornication, to bring an individual under the weight of this terrible anathema. One act of drunkenness is a heinous sin and an abomination in the sight of God, and tends to the destruction of man for time and eternity. It is not only a sin against the Most High, but against every part of the moral and physical constitution which God has given us. "Whosoever doth commit it, committeth not a single sin," saith Augustine, "but becomes the centre and the slave of all manner of sin." Hence drunkenness is not specified as a breach of any one commandment in particular. It leads, more or less directly, to the violation of every command in the Decalogue, and is equally opposed to both tables of the Divine Law. The natural result of its indulgence is that state of almost hopeless moral degradation and fatal abandonment which the Apostle calls "excess," and which leads in so many cases to repeated acts of reckless self-indulgence and utter abandonment, until the person becomes a habitual and confirmed drunkard, consciously lost for time and for eternity. "Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower. The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, shall be trodden under foot; and the glorious beauty shall be a fading flower, and as the hasty fruit before the summer."

II.—THE CAUSES OF INTEMPERANCE.

The use of the spirit called Alcohol is in every case the immediate cause of intemperance. Whether the effect be induced by the use of fermented liquors, or distilled spirits, more or less diluted or mixed into cordials, the exciting agent is in all cases the same. The spirit is produced by the decomposition of sugar in fermentation. It is not found among all the "good creatures of God." Nature does not produce it. The destruction of some "good creature" which God has given for food is necessary to its existence. Distillation is the modern art by which the fiery demon of intoxication has been evoked in terrible purity and strength, to become the greatest modern scourge and destroyer of mankind. Alcohol is not food, nor is it necessary to the health of the human system. It is a simple poison. If taken rapidly in sufficient quantity, it will produce almost instant stupor and death. When taken less rapidly, it will produce all the unmistake-

able symptoms and loathsome accompaniments of intoxication or gradual poisoning, resulting at last in paroxysms of delirium, madness, and death. So exclusively are these results dependent on the use of Alcohol that they are dealt with in Medical Science under the name of "Alcoholism," and drunkenness or intoxication is always treated by the faculty as a case of poisoning. The common use of the poison—Alcohol—is the cause of all the intemperance which now exists, and of its dreadful results.

But there are many secondary and pre-disposing causes which require to be noticed. These operate, through the prevailing customs and opinions of society, in maintaining the extensive use of Alcohol as a common beverage or luxury, and thus directly contribute to the spread and continuance of this tremendous evil. No one ventures to defend drunkenness, or to plead for intoxication even in its earliest stages. But how many of the people and ministers of God still attempt to vindicate, even from the Word of God, the moderate use of the drink that produces intoxication! In how many Christian households, where the worship of God is still maintained, is that drink openly produced as an article of daily and necessary use—pressed with fatal, we might say Satanic kindness upon the acceptance of visitors, and even put into the hands of children as an innocent and useful beverage? When we consider the essentially deceitful and ensnaring character of Alcoholic drinks, and that so many of the professed servants of God are ready to volunteer the sanction of their own example and advocacy on their behalf, we may cease to wonder that, in a civilized and Christian country, intoxication, with all its distressing accompaniments and appalling results, should be so prevalent. It is to be feared that in some backward districts, where the arts and influences of civilization are so slow in asserting their supremacy, persons may still be found to argue that the free use of intoxicating drink is desirable, if not indispensable, in all the most solemn and awful changes in the life of man. Even "wakes" and drunken funerals, marriages, and baptisms, may be found lingering in certain localities to show that Christianity has not yet succeeded in expelling the hideous customs of an abjured heathenism from the land. These are things which should not be once named among us as becometh saints.

The chief predisposing as well as producing cause of intemperance is the power of Alcohol, enslaving to itself the entire nature of man. The action of the spirit on the nerve centres renders them physically unfitted for their functions, and induces the diseased state of the system, which is called Alcoholism, or intoxication. The uneasy sensations of depression which follow the first excitement beget that irresistible craving for further stimulants which leads to continued drinking. Persons of a nervous temperament, when under depression, and *mothers*, when in a low state of health, are peculiarly liable to fall under the iron grip of this terrible and most deceptive malady. Inconsiderate medical treatment often conduces to this result. "Doses which produce symptoms of *narcotism*, implant in the patient that craving for drink which forces him against his will to indulge with constantly increasing intemperance in the abuse of Alcoholic liquors." This is the testimony of Dr. F. E. Anstie, Senior Physician to the

Westminster Hospital, published during the present year. He even traces the power of drunkenness in reproducing itself through several generations. "I believe that things often work in a vicious circle to this end; and that the nervous enfeeblement produced in an ancestor, by great excess in drink, is reproduced in his various descendants as insanity in one, epilepsy in another, neuralgia in a third, alcoholic excess in a fourth, and so on." This is not merely a moral but a physical disease, which needs specific treatment. But when we attempt to deal with it by itself, and as a preliminary to the offer of the Divine message, after the example of our Master, who cast out demons, and healed all manner of diseases, as well as preached the Gospel to the poor, it is said we are putting Total Abstinence in place of the Gospel. But was the Gospel intended to cure physical maladies? And if it had the power, is it likely to be received by men who are under the iron grasp of Alcoholism? "The disease," says Dr. Anstie, "is decidedly curable, tending in fact to right itself on the simple adoption of a plan of *complete abstinence* from the exciting cause of the mischief." The Gospel will preserve a sober man from temptation, and guide the penitent to the footstool of pardoning mercy, but is not itself sufficient to reclaim the drunkard. This kind goeth not out but by prayer and *fasting*.

The extraordinary number of Public Houses, with the arts and allurements incessantly employed by so many interested and heartless persons to seduce the public into them, are the greatest external cause of the intemperance of our land. There are 166,013 Houses licensed for the retail of Intoxicating Drinks in the United Kingdom. In many places they are the only houses for rest and refreshment open to the public. Young persons are at first reluctantly drawn into them, and there become accustomed to the free use of the Drunkard's drink. Farmers and farm servants, week after week, enter these houses under some excuse of business, and thus get intoxicated, who would not introduce spirits into their own houses. Many a drunkard, struggling hard against the vice that has inthralled him, feels all his resolutions shattered, and his hopeful efforts paralysed by the fascination that assails him through these open doors to misery and hell. Public Houses have a more powerfully seductive influence than the uninitiated can realize. Dr. Anstie observes—"A large number of cases present themselves at the hospital which are directly traceable to the frequent presence of the temptation, as in the case of workmen at breweries and distilleries, and the potmen and waiters at taverns. In a higher grade of life, public-house keepers, and the clerks and travellers for wine and spirit merchants, are especially liable to Alcoholism." A great and visible diminution of drunkenness and crime has taken place in Scotland since Public Houses were closed on the Lord's day. From the report of the Committee of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland for the suppression of intemperance, the following facts are extracted relative to the social and religious condition of 478 parishes:—First, "that the absence of public-houses in a district, or the extreme rarity, is accompanied by an almost total absence of drinking and its results. Secondly, that the prevalence of many public-houses is attended by the prevalence of much drinking and its sequential evils. Thirdly, that the increase of

public-houses and other facilities for drinking, is followed by a proportionate increase of drunkenness and debauchery. Fourthly, that the suppression or decrease of public-houses and dramshops, or the diminishing, by other means, of the facilities for drinking, is followed by a corresponding improvement in the habits and morals of the population."

III.—THE EFFECTS OF INTEMPERANCE.

Alcohol is a poison, and acts as such upon the person who imbibes it. It is not decomposed and assimilated with the system as an article of food. Nature in self-defence rejects and expels it. But while this is being effected, it acts as a fatal irritant and destroyer on every part of man's constitution. The stomach and liver are directly injured and inflamed by its action, and in consequence the process of digestion is retarded and disturbed. Passing from these organs into the circulation, it seriously affects the rate of movement and vitality of the blood, diminishes the general nutrition, and tends to the production of an inert and dangerous fat, which impairs the vigour of the constitution, and becomes the ready receptacle of disease. The blood, which should be constantly enriching and renovating the tissues of the body, when charged with alcohol, carries inflammation, derangement, and death to all parts of the system. Displaying a special affinity for the nerve centres, it operates powerfully upon them, and is rapidly accumulated on the brain—thus, literally "going to the head" of the patient. Intense excitement, resulting in general confusion, partial paralysis, and *delirium tremens*, mark the continued action of spirits on the nervous system. Not only is the health of the body impaired, and every part predisposed to disease, but an agent, poisonous in its nature, and destructive of life, is deliberately and persistently taken into contact with the peculiarly fine and sensitive organs of human vitality. This is the reason why intemperate persons are called "rotten lives," and their applications uniformly rejected by Insurance Associations. It has been shown that the average rate of mortality among intemperate persons is 32, as compared with 10 taken from the general community. While the average expectation of life to the temperate man, at 50 years of age, is reckoned at 20 years, that of the drunkard is only 4 years. Intemperance is gradual and inexcusable self-murder—a direct breach of the commandment which says—"Thou shalt not kill."

But the intoxication and consequent paralysis of the brain immediately affect the intellectual and moral departments of our nature. A sound mind cannot dwell in a diseased and poisoned body. The idiotic eye, the babbling tongue, the grotesque demeanour, the confusion which characterises every mental effort, sufficiently indicate the enfeeblement and degradation of soul, which results from the use of Alcohol. Mental activity may be excited in the first instance, and the imagination stimulated to efforts of fitful brilliancy, but the keen edge of perception is at once blunted, the will trembles, and vacillates on its throne, and the reasoning powers are shattered and destroyed. It is said that three-fourths of the cases of insanity in England spring from intemperance. Dr. Crawford, of Richmond Asylum, Dublin, says—"I feel confident that at least one out of two of the patients now in the Asylum have become insane in consequence of the abuse of

ardent spirits; and I know that the same has been observed in the other public lunatic asylums in Ireland." Another medical authority declares—"The drunkard not only injures and enfeebles his own nervous system, but entails mental disease upon his family. His daughters are nervous and hysterical; his sons are weak, wayward, eccentric." Of 300 idiots in Massachusetts, the parents of 145 were found to be habitual drunkards. Such physical and mental destruction could not be carried on without the utter subversion of the moral nature of man. To yield to such a vice, is the voluntary abandonment of all self-control. To court it, is simply to seek entire and everlasting destruction. The soul prostrates herself in the mire before the insane cravings of a poisoned appetite for drink. As the exquisite beauties of Neapolitan horticulture disappear before a torrrent of burning lava, so all the fine instincts of our moral nature, with the delightful sympathies and susceptibilities of the soul, wither and perish beneath the hot fetid breath of intoxication. One of the first and most deplorable symptoms of the power of intemperance is irregularity in the observance of God's worship, and inability to participate in its exercises aright, with a general and growing indifference to all spiritual concerns. This is by far the most insidious and insatiable of those "fleshy lusts which war against the soul." Conscience, blinded and besotted, falls from its seat; the heart utterly seared by selfish and brutalizing indulgence, is, in the language of Scripture, "taken away;" the basest passions of our nature, fired to unrestrainable ferocity, become capable of crimes, the most inhuman, and exult in scenes of brutality and death. "And now the vortex roars, and the struggling victim buffets the fiery main with feebler stroke, until despair flashes upon his soul, and with an outcry that pierces the heavens, he ceases to strive, and disappears." But as he disappears, the voice of the Eternal, as from the throne of judgment, peals forth the dreadful requiem—"The drunkard shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

The domestic and national effects of intemperance may be easily inferred from the havoc which it works on the individual man. Love, which is the bond of family completeness, the fountain of domestic enjoyment, is as impossible in the heart—we had almost said the house—of the drunkard, as verdure on the burning lips of a volcano. Domestic peace, happiness, religion, with all the comforts and decencies of family life, make their exit as the demon of intemperance enters. Heartrending sorrow and hopeless distress are the lot of the drunkard's wife; poverty and ignorance, cruelty and crime, are the inheritance of the drunkard's children. Oh! what scenes of hellish savagism and wild brutality are enacted even in the sanctuary of family life and love—

> "When the vitriol madness flushes up in the ruffian's head
> Till the filthy by-lane rings to the yell of the trampled wife!"

We will not now speak of the positively incalculable loss entailed upon the nation by the wanton destruction of precious food, time, industry, character, and life, which is caused by intemperance. Nor can we speak of the pestilential diseases and horrid crimes and blasphemies ever issuing forth from the dens of intoxication, and which cover the land with such portentous darkness and deadly effluvium as might only be expected from the opened mouth of hell.

Education strives in vain to overtake the ignorance which drunkenness entails. In vain does the Church, with all her busy agencies of Christian love, strive to reclaim the masses that have lapsed, and are still lapsing through drink, into heathenism and death around her very doors. The effects of intemperance are the same everywhere. Sir S. W. Baker, in his "Albert N'Yanza," thus describes its effects on an ivory-trading party in the centre of Africa, whom he had taught the deadly art of distillation—"Nothing could exceed the brutality of the people; they had erected stills, and produced a powerful corn-spirit from the native merissa; their entire time was passed in gambling, drinking, and fighting both night and day. The natives were ill-treated; their female slaves and children brutally ill-used, and the entire camp was a mere slice from the infernal regions." How necessary the warning—"Wine is a mocker; strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."

IV.—THE PREVALENCE OF INTEMPERANCE.

Persons who know nothing of intemperance in their own families, and whose walks through life are specially selected and guarded to preserve them from contact with its effects abroad, will have difficulty in realizing the appalling magnitude into which this evil has grown, or the manner in which it is eating, like a deadly cancer, deeper and deeper into the vitals of the nation. Yet what family is there on which its dark and fatal shadow has not already fallen—what neighbourhood that does not supply many illustrations of its fell power and irremediable results—what congregation that has not to mourn, year after year, some of its most hopeful members dragged, as from the horns of the altar, to become miserable victims of a hopeless destruction? The extent of the evil may be glanced at from different points of view. To supply the demand for strong drink in the Three Kingdoms, there are destroyed 65 millions of bushels of grain in the year—a quantity sufficient to feed the whole population of Ireland. There are 166,013 licensed houses for the retail of intoxicating drinks. Allowing, on the average, three persons to each establishment, we have nearly 500,000 persons daily employed in serving out the drinks which produce intoxication. The total purchase-cost of intoxicating drinks consumed in the United Kingdom, in 1866, was £101,252,551. Dr. Leone Levi has estimated that there are 3,900,000 female workers in the Three Kingdoms, and their total earnings only amount to £102,000,000. Some idea of the extent of intemperance may be formed from the astounding fact, that, of the money annually expended upon it, £20 might be laid on each letter in the Bible, and £26,000,000 would still be left. If this money were withdrawn from the traffic, how much healthier, wealthier, happier, and wiser would the nation soon become? If it were expended on the cause of Christ, how speedily would the everlasting Gospel be preached to every creature that is under heaven? It is calculated that there are 600,000 habitual drunkards in the United Kingdom, that is, one in every fifty of the population, including children. About 20,000 of these die annually, slain by strong drink. The aggregate number of deaths, occasioned by the direct and indirect influence of alcohol in the year, is 54,000. What a holocaust to be offered up in a Christian land to

the legalised and specially licensed traffic in intoxicating drinks! This is a traffic more expensive than any of the idolatries of the heathen world; more deadly than any plague that stalks the infected countries of the East.

V.—THE DUTY OF THE CHURCH WITH REGARD TO INTEMPERANCE.

The duty of every member and office-bearer in the Church may be summed up in one word—ABSTAIN. "Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright; at the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder." We could scarcely expect a direct command from God not to intoxicate or destroy ourselves. Nature itself teaches us to shrink with abhorrence from such a crime, and God's Word declares that the drunkard shall not inherit His kingdom. "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." "Abstain from all appearance of evil." "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the spirit." "Touch not the unclean thing."

The duty of every congregation of the Church is to organize and agitate for the purpose of resisting and opposing this tremendous evil. How deep is the disgrace and guilt of neutrality in such a cause? How awful to think that Christian congregations spend immensely more money on intoxicating drinks than on the cause of Christ and the world's salvation! Should not every member stand forth before the community publicly pledged not only to abstain but to oppose intemperance with all that directly conduces thereto, until, by the blessing of God, it shall be driven from the land? While so many powerful interests and influences are engaged in its support, it will require the combined resources, influence, and strength of the whole Church in every locality to present an effective opposition. Such organizations may offer a "City of Refuge" to some wishing to escape from the swift destruction which follows on the heels of intemperance, and will be the means of training up the young to live and die with a heart hatred of intoxication. Let congregations ponder the anathema pronounced against indifference in a similar cause—"Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty."

The duty of the whole Church is to act with united force, concentrated resources, and holy courage in this matter. Our whole weight should be thrown forcibly into the scale against intemperance, and against the traffic which sustains it. Not content with driving the demon from our own altars and firesides, we should make our consistent and unswerving testimony felt in the councils and high places of the nation. As lovers of our country, and of the cause and name of God, which are so blasphemed through the drinking customs of the day, we should swear unceasing warfare against intemperance, and never lay down our protest until the nation shall withdraw its license and legislative sanction from this unparalleled national curse, and until its last stronghold, with every vestige of its power, shall be swept from the earth for ever. Amen, and amen.